

Economic Development Public Meeting Input



Governor's Economic and Workforce Development Strategic Plans

[July 18](#) – Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus

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Economic Development Breakout Group Topics by Location

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Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus **July 18, 2006**

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Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave **July 20, 2006**

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Virginia Highlands Community College, Abingdon **July 21, 2006**

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Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, Danville **July 31, 2006**

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John Tyler Community College, Chester Campus **August 1, 2006**

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Norfolk State University, Norfolk **August 2, 2006**

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I. Business Development and International Trade

Business Development Strengths

- Proximity to the national capitol and federal resources
- Technical infrastructure in Arlington – broadband, etc.
- Dulles and National Airports
- Well-educated workforce/talent
- Strong primary education system
- Existing industry clusters provide nexus and synergy for further growth
- Area has leading edge technologies
- Strong spirit of entrepreneurship
- Good access to capital and personal assets
- Spin-off military companies
- Howard Hughes Medical Center in Loudon County
- George Mason University and local Community Colleges

Business Development Challenges

- Insufficient transportation infrastructure
- High cost of housing
- High cost of talent attraction
- Government needs more engagement with the business community
- Lack a comprehensive assessment of business needs
- No global marketing strategy
- Need additional/consistent funding for international marketing and branding
- Need a framework of common information between state and local governments
- Erosion of business climate by difficult political issues, including transportation and operational issues
- Problems with the retention of workforce – talent leakage
- Insufficient preparation for emergency scenarios – economic, terrorism and others
- Lack of focus on manufacturing and production in the state and nation
- Perception that Virginia is not inclusive of diversity

Business Development Recommendations

- Continued development of means to incentivize research and development, commercialization of research, and planning continuity for:
 - Venture/private capital
 - University funding
 - Public tax breaks and incentives
 - Angel investment, Commonwealth Technology Research Fund, etc.
 - Technical assistance through the Center for Innovative Technology and others to improve internal capacities to commercialize research
- Develop a consistent plan that bridges administrations including strategies and marketing to address programmatic goals and objectives. This should include an existing business strategy

with a comprehensive assessment of business needs; greater focus on international marketing; and focus on new company development.

- Develop strategies to address the need for affordable housing, the cost of living, and infrastructure, such as:
 - Establish a task force for employer options
 - Encourage collaborative community work on workforce housing
 - Encourage telecommuting
 - Emphasize mass transit to address transportation needs
- Provide expertise and training for non-basic industries
- Provide free Science and Tech education for graduate who agree to stay in Virginia
- High schools in Virginia should have Vo-Tech Districts.
- Develop international marketing strategies such as:
 - Cultural and opportunity-based education
 - Enhanced marketing funding
 - Provide financing incentives
 - Additional education focus on foreign language skills
 - Support the VALET program under VEDP
 - Share state and local resources

II. Tourism

Tourism Strengths

- Diverse attractions in region
- Solid physical infrastructure to support tourism
- Geographic diversity of state and proximity to D.C.
- Accessible from many regions of the U.S. and many countries
- National reputation
- Strong Brand (Virginia is for Lovers)
- Strong regional, state and local tourism agencies
- Weather and climate
- State parks
- Cultural centers and activities
- Secondary Roads
- Diversity of existing population
- Historic resources

Tourism Challenges

- Congested traffic
- Lack of public transportation in certain areas
- Security Concerns
- Regional growth/sprawl
- Not marketing state as a whole
- Not marketing Northern Virginia as strongly
- Gas prices
- Competition for time and money
- High cost in urban areas

Tourism Recommendations

- Establish national/international campaign to market Virginia as a whole
- Address Northern Virginia transportation issues
- Maintain and create tourism infrastructure/attractions; asset development and promotion
- Market our central, accessible location
- Greater recognition/leveraging of impact of business travelers; partnering of tourism and traditional economic development efforts
- Develop regional partnerships to offer combination packages to take advantage of multiple areas and regions
- Highlight Virginia's hidden treasures within the region, state and neighboring states
- Link local and regional attractions
- Update visitor/welcome center information and increase its visibility
- Analyze funding to ensure that Virginia's spending is competitive with other states
- Build on recognized celebrity connection (famous Virginians)

III. Leveraging Federal Assets/Research and Development

Leveraging Strengths

- Industrial diversity of Virginia's economy.
- Strong business climate and resources for business.
- Small Business Development Centers and federal funds to support them.
- Great community colleges and universities.
- Multicultural-trained work force.
- Proximity to the federal government
- Highly-educated work force in the area
- Government support for BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) areas
- Connections with colleges and universities provide extensions of opportunity.
- Proximity to National Science Foundation.
- Prince William/George Mason University partnerships: bio and nanotechnology and information security assurance.
- Proximity to Patent and Trademark office, Department of Defense, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the Office of Naval Research
- Area's private wealth and affluence
- Strong entrepreneurial spirit
- Local research and development tax credits
- Mason Enterprise Center and its outreach to the business community
- Center for Innovative Technology to help universities overcome specialties and bureaucracy.

Leveraging Challenges

- BRAC – Need to make sure that federal funds get to the supplemental agencies.
 - Challenges are different with respect to office relocations because they aren't considered military bases, but the size of the impact is equivalent to four military bases. Need the state to recognize the impact on Arlington, Alexandria, and Fairfax and need high-level officials to be a mouthpiece for these areas.

- Need declaration of economic distress in anticipation of impact – Coordinated Economic Relief Center for Arlington/Alexandria?
 - BRAC process has changed, but resource allocation
- State needs to support efforts to keep federal research facilities in the area.
- Colleges and universities need to do a better job tracking and procuring funding for research and the state needs to ratchet up the focus and concentrate on best practices in this area.
- Need better access to venture capital and increase awareness of existing sources.
- There is a disconnect between the universities and venture capital.
- Need systems to commercialize university research.
- University procurement process and other state and university policies discourage innovation and entrepreneurship.

Leveraging Recommendations

- State needs to look at Northern Virginia as individual localities, not as a region. Establish a BRAC transitional office in Crystal City.
- Leverage political resources to gain support for federal funding – need a champion and advocate for this purpose. Lack of a base drives a greater need for advocates.
- Invest more in small business incubator programs, especially Small Business Development Centers – existing programs with proven worth.
- Simplify intellectual property and streamline system to commercialize university research, business sabbaticals for example.
- State needs to support efforts to keep federal facilities such as DARPA in Virginia.
- Streamline state procurement processes and assist Small, Women-owned, and Minority businesses in accessing state business.
- Create a state venture capital fund for early stage companies.
- Spend more money on university-based research and development
- Establish a more competitive angel investor tax credit.

IV. Building Strong Regional Economies and Strong Communities

Regional/Community Strengths

- Proximity to the federal government
- Strong and diverse labor force
- Central location
- Proximity to International Airports
- Small business growth and support
- Diverse business climate
- Multi-industry appeal
- Natural resources
- Diverse economic base
- Faith- and community-based organization cooperation with local government
- Strong job growth

Regional/Community Challenges

- Tight labor market
- High cost of housing

- Inadequate transportation infrastructure
- Scattered patterns of development – land use, sprawl
- Weak regional collaboration
 - Internal competition with relocations
 - Tax structure builds divisions
- General Assembly relations with Northern Virginia identity
- Language skills/cultural differences
- International immigration
 - Limiting immigration is limiting the workforce
 - Immigrants are necessary to construction and other industries
 - Day laborers and other immigrants are now part of the underground economy and subject to exploitation
 - Northern Virginia economy need H1B Visa program
 - 150 plus languages in the region
 - Trust issue in the community – afraid to receive training services
 - Need school support for English as a Second Language programs
- Tendency to see “Northern Virginia” as a monolith, rather than a series of communities each with own challenges and strengths
- Land use issues
 - Inner suburbs facing some decline
 - Revitalization efforts locally are not recognized on a large scale for HUD assistance
 - Tension between Suburban/bedroom communities and commercial uses
 - No means of tax base sharing
 - Localities need more power and authority to deal with land use issues – hampered by Dillon rule
- Affordable housing issues
 - Constant changes to zoning and building code
 - Need to provide a full range of options – workers, elderly, young families
 - Affordability index includes housing and transportation – an increasingly large portion of worker income is devoted to commuting costs.
 - Challenges preserving existing affordable housing in face of large increases in housing values
 - Transportation and housing issues lose businesses to other states
- Taxation issues
 - State pulls local tax revenues (i.e. car tax) to pay for state problems
 - Localities limited by Dillon Rule
 - Raid on local tax receipts strengthens regional divisions
 - Localities forced to increase reliance of property taxes, which increases pressure to develop and increases pressure on housing choices
 - Hit by education composite index
 - Local government needs a share of the revenue generated through economic development
- Donor region
 - Export jobs to other areas
 - Export revenue to other areas of the state
 - Hard for localities to lobby for help in problem areas and disadvantaged populations when region is seen as affluent

Regional/Community Recommendations

- Provide incentives for “Smart Growth” linking land use, transportation, and housing

- The Governor should provide the leadership to develop a Virginia immigration policy, and should work with Virginia's Congressional Delegation to meet the needs of employers for H1B visas.
- Stop raiding local taxes
- Grant localities access to a portion of income tax receipts through revenue sharing.
- Link faith-based, community-based and labor organizations to develop trust with the immigrant population and deliver services in a non-threatening environment.
- Link Housing policy with transportation funding
- Provide public school support for English as a Second Language training
- Conduct a study to demonstrate immigrants contributions to Virginia's economy, including the underground economy
- Encourage development activity where the infrastructure exists
- Broaden local tax base.

Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave

July 20, 2006

I. Business Development and International Trade

Business Development Strengths

- Quality of life
- Diversified economic base
- Favorable business litigation climate
- Decent worker compensation rate
- Favorable relationship with OSHA
- Strong education system
- Location to US population base
- Work ethic (good)
- Transportation-(interstate and airport)
- Environmental beauty
- Strong regional cooperation and volunteerism
- Business-friendly regional environment
- Accessibility of transportation
- Right to work
- Existing business base interest
- Stable economic businesses
- Healthcare Resources
- Outdoor recreation opportunities
- Cost of living (compared with NOVA)
- Cultural amenities
- Value added agriculture
- Agriculture base

Business Development Challenges

- Instability in electricity market (deregulation)
- Transportation cost

- Lack of incentives
- Underemployment
- Affordable workforce
- Housing availability
- Declining manufacturing base
- Global competition
- Declining local ownership of businesses
- Cost of regulation (Virginia regulations more stringent than federal and other states)
- Interest in short-term profits vs. long-term business growth
- Lack of broadband in rural areas
- Disconnect between state income tax vs. local property tax
- Conflict in goals for quality of life (imbalance)
- Transportation infrastructure pushed to limits (maintaining infrastructure)
- Tax balance source of revenues vs. tax burden
- Lack of angel capital/venture capital for small/start-up companies
- Under-educated workers/shortage of skilled labor (middle skill levels)
- Availability of adequate workforce
- Lack of knowledge of state service programs (overlap of programs)

Business Development Recommendations

- Better outreach in existing business program, coordinated with state/local/fed
- More local flexibility on incentives in tax policy and state incentives for economic development.
- Develop broadband availability in rural areas
- Place electric deregulations under SCC to insure economic stability
- Coop/internship/apprenticeship incentives to help certain students meet job and employment needs
- Develop a regional consensus on economic development vision and reorganize trade-offs and competitive concerns (more extensive buy-in from stakeholders)
- Encourage regional cooperation incentives for regional revenue sharing
- Create incentive programs to attract what is wanted and tax unwanted
- Change corporate tax law to encourage and retain capital investment in Virginia
- Strengthen incentives for existing businesses for workforce training

II. Tourism

Tourism Strengths

- Oldest destination market organization in the country – “Shenandoah Valley Travelers Association”
- Scenic quality of I-81
- Diversity of downtown’s in our smaller towns
- Proximity to the major east coast markets
- Opportunity to create a regional brand (organic foods)
- Potential to build on natural assets that could help market the region as a whole
- Historical Sites (civil war)
- Heritage of the valley
- Unique destination points
- Hospitality of citizens

Tourism Challenges

- Deplorable rest area facilities
- Competitive wages for tourism professionals
- Affordable housing for tourism providers and local residents
- Difficulty in balancing growth versus maintaining natural beauty
- Aid farmers in ability to maintain land, property, and diversify goods products
- Better linkage with VCCS and local farmers to diversify products
- Lack of incentives for local farmers to help maintain land
- Congestion of I-81
 - 18 wheelers
 - Named one of the top 10 endangered roads
- Perception of cultural diversity
- Attitudes of longtime residents when it comes to tourists
- Tourism not seen as a priority (lack of funding at the local and state levels)
- Creating a regional marketing strategy that works, “cross-promotion”
- Create in each county an agro-tourism marketing program
- Regulation liabilities in Agro-tourism

Tourism Recommendations

- Protection of view sheds on scenic roads, such as Blue Ridge Parkway, Skyline Drive and other scenic by ways
- Educate tourists on Virginia history
- Renovate rest areas and welcome visitor centers
- State guidelines on how to balance growth and maintaining of natural beauty
- State matching funds to support local planning
- State economic development should recognize local comprehensive plans.
- Extend scenic by-way designation to Route 11 and route 250 west
- Develop driving tours of the valley
- Being pro-active on transportation as it relates to tourism
- Limiting the amount of liabilities for tourism facilities and agro tourism
- Education at the state and local level of importance of tourism, including VA history
- Support and invest in green infrastructure

III. No Leveraging Federal Assets/R&D Participation

IV. Building Strong Regional Economies and Strong Communities

Regional/Community Strengths

- Historical aspects in communities
- Cooperation among regions
- Integrity of history
- Strong base of technical workforce
- Major universities
- Lower tax rates in communities

- People with disabilities/hard to serve have opportunities for training/education
- Economic opportunity
- Productivity/low unemployment in this region
- Quality of life, approachability, helpfulness of local government
- People's independence and self-reliance
- Location
- Natural resources
- Quality of life/family orientation
- Good workforce
- Strong agricultural base
- Excellent schools
- Politeness and professionalism
- Community colleges
- Vocational tech system
- Diversity: geographical and cultural
- Great transportation network
- Diversity and creativity

Regional/Community Challenges

- Inconsistency among localities in permitting, zoning for construction and development: business unfriendly environment
- Affordable housing and land for business development
- Linkage of workforce development with existing business needs and low education levels in some parts of state
- Lack of tech infrastructure and critical mass to support tech community, especially startup
- Employment/workforce: recruitment of tech workers locally
- Out-commuting: live here, work there, localities have trouble recruiting
- Workforce housing
- Independent city/county creates competition, not cooperation
- Economic development downtown: zoning and empty buildings
- Transportation system needs investment, need alternative transportation
- Affordable housing
- Virginia shouldn't become complacent with success in employment, management
- Transportation
- Utility structure: caps on rates scheduled to expire, long term monitoring
- Lack of coordination with education
- Lack of soft skills
- Pressure towards college rather than vocation
- Business reliant on illegal immigrants, solutions not available on state level
- Existing businesses don't know how to use telework
- Infrastructure, transportation and public transportation
- Drain of young educated population
- Lack of broadband tech, no tech based economic development plan
- No coordination between state-mandated comprehensive plan and desire of local communities
- Economic development should express contents of strategic plan
- Lack of professional jobs

- Immigrant workers: lack of clear policy, enforcement, verifiable information
- Virginia not competitive (in terms of incentives) with neighbor states
- Brain drain from rural to urban (especially young college grads)
- Transportation: public/private, road, rail, air, and ports
- Living wage: need to be self-supporting

Regional/Community Recommendations

- Fund transport (all modes) adequately with more local control, allow greater federal match
- Develop and implement statewide tech-based development plan including rural and including seed money
- Affordable housing: summit, set aside percentage of units as a condition of zoning approval, support localities in establishing development authorities, encourage mixed-use zoning, incentives for owner-occupied thru VHDA and federal authorities
- Give localities greater authority and flexibility with less interference from state (Dillon Rule)
- Create agricultural enterprise zones
- Improve education levels, not just college bound, more trade-based, market vocational opportunities
- Eliminate independent cities/counties
- Implement revenue sharing
- Provide incentives for venture capital in communities, capitalize on tech-based opportunities
- Provide seed funding for small/micro business development
- Market existing educational opportunities
- Encourage entrepreneur education, K-12 thru college (T-ball for business)
- Incentives for regional cooperation
- Workforce development: state incentives for startups/tech
- Communicate how much money can be made in the trades
- Reimburse employers for training thru incentives
- Consult the community about the type of economic development efforts they want.

Virginia Highlands Community College, Abingdon

July 21, 2006

I. Business Development and International Trade

Business Development Strengths

- Pro-business climate including low taxes, a reasonable regulatory environment, and motivated elected officials.
- Strong business incentives.
- High quality of life, including amenities, low crime rate.
- Strong work ethic.
- The transportation network provides good proximity to markets and airports.
- Good availability of land for industrial parks and other uses.
- Close to Foreign Trade Zone
- Good community college system
- Low utility rates
- Low traffic

- Growing technological infrastructure, i.e. fiber network
- Strong arts community and cultural accessibility
- Proven success of existing industrial base
- Affordable housing and low cost of living
- Good labor relations
- Proximity and alliance to other states providing leverage and synergy including regional collaboration and cooperation.
- Best practices established by Virginia
- Low crime and an environment not prone to natural disaster
- Entrepreneurial support services
- Major energy producer
- Progressive health care system with a medical school near by and state of the art medical services

Business Development Challenges

- Topography of the land slows down the development of technical infrastructure and limits the availability of suitable real estate
- Stigma attached to rural communities because of access issues and remoteness
- Environmental issues such as protected species, historic sites, and wetlands restricts development
- Perception of strained labor relations
- Inability/unwillingness to address transportation issues
- Shortage of an employable skilled workforce
- Lack of litter laws gives bad impression
- Substance abuse problems that limit the employability of the workforce, particularly prescription drug abuse
- Low per-capita income in the region
- Limited access to capital for new businesses, an aversion to risk among the area's investors
- Low educational attainment
- Lack of "know-how" to become an entrepreneur
- Shortage of quality housing
- Lack of amenities such as shopping, movies, coffee houses, etc.
- Growing cultural and communication issues with an increasing Hispanic population
- Lack of zoning and nuisance ordinances in some counties
- Perception that agriculture is not a viable industry or a quality way of life
- Lack of public transportation
- Lack of "liquor by the drink" in some areas inhibits the attractiveness of hotels and restaurants
- Lack of food processing facilities nearby – farms are too far away from potential customers
- Lack of smoke-free public environments
- Lack of diversity is a challenge to establishing a global environment
- Resistance to change and citizen apathy
- Job market is not sufficiently diversified
- Run-down, vacant and decaying buildings in downtown areas
- Elected official support and engagement in economic development, especially tourism.
- Lack of sewage infrastructure limits residential and industrial development

Business Development Recommendations

- Regions need to develop a sound economic development strategic plan

- Retain existing business programs at the state, regional and local levels to help existing businesses with financing, workforce development, expansion incentives and advocacy.
- Keep importance of transportation as an important aspect of Economic Development in the forefront of the minds of elected officials.
- Educate K-12 students for needed job and entrepreneurial skills; establish career coaching programs (like the Pharmacy Tech program)
- Use best practices from other economic development groups to broaden perspective of local officials and current and emerging leaders
- Promote the expansion of existing healthcare facilities as employment options; and promote digital exchange of data between healthcare providers
- Commerce and Trade office provide support for physician office based treatment programs, outreach, and education regarding for substance abuse. Support broader enforcement actions for illegal prescription trafficking.
- Develop land use assessment and system of valuation based on the use of the property
- Remove cultural barriers to attracting employers and workers to the region – provide more cultural amenities, ie a broader range of retailers, bars, hotels, restaurants, etc.

II. Tourism

Tourism Strengths

- Crooked Road – music heritage
- Natural beauty and resources
- Historical sites, state parks
- Climate
- Trails – hike/bike
- Local art/artisans and artisans' center
- Community support
- Cultural heritage and lifestyle
- Barter Theater, history and arts, arts center
- Museums, theaters
- Festivals, Fiddlers'
- Trail of the lonesome pine
- Living history re-enactment
- Local heritage/arts/history events
- Opportunity based on location and local resources
- Outdoor recreation: hunt, fish, boating, rafting, hiking, horseback, birding
- Friendliest people/genuine southern hospitality
- Enthusiasm of workforce/quality
- Martha Washington and other hotels/resorts with history
- Claytor Lake
- Higher education opportunities
- Meeting sites

Tourism Challenges

- Need investment in hotels/spas to spur visits to key sites
- Need marketing funds for local/regional offices
- Need sales tax like Abingdon or local tax

- VTC needs more funds, regional matching grants
- Mementos: gifts to take from region, local crafts need to be integrated into shops, not imported items, especially in state parks
- Artisans center should be promoted regionally
- Jamestown 2007 is not focusing on the rest of Virginia and its resources
- Economic viability for young people to stay in the region, art and education, career in arts is not facilitated in school curriculum
- Lack of training for local careers/industries
- Service jobs pay minimum wage
- Growth must be balanced/preserve local character, though concern for this can hinder change
- Want to avoid becoming “bedroom community” for more developed areas
- Few places to eat/sleep, discourages visit length
- Lee/Scott/Wise, hard to find highway exits/roads are crooked
- Insufficient marketing
- Need more road signage, especially new Hwy 58 in Lee and 11 in Lebanon
- Different state departments lack coordination and waste resources
- Visitor centers need to promote local businesses/be interactive, also in restaurants/markets/stations, service workers
- Businesses do not coordinate/share contact info
- Chamber of commerce does not compile information
- Tourism staff do not encourage/train front-end workers
- Management of businesses do not buy-in to cooperative training
- Lack of community tourism program (or funding for) in many localities
- Elected officials often have strategy that public does not support
- Eyesores: junkyard/litter, garbage problem, regulations are not enforced, recycling is not established program, open-bed trucks with garbage
- Need litter awareness program
- Brochure racks are filled by out-of-state businesses
- Dry counties

Tourism Recommendations

- Funding for tourism marketing and establishing tourism sites and increased VTC funding
- Economic development should encourage development in a controlled way, remembering our sense of place
- Establish a program to promote local businesses and train workers in customer service/service industry
- Encourage a cleaner and more protected environment and local beautification
- Improve road signage both in Virginia and cooperatively with neighboring states, especially on 81 corridor
- Encourage communication across stateliness: marketing, transportation, events
- Coordinate actions of state agencies to avoid wasting time and resources
- Clean up welcome centers and rest areas
- Encourage state-operated facilities to sell local artisan products
- Government should encourage public forum/meetings and communicate more

III. Leveraging Federal Assets/ Research and Development

Leveraging Strengths

- Quality of life, including short commutes, low cost of living, low crime, and not a national security target.
- Good choice for corporations looking to relocate from urban areas for quality of life issues.
- Low cost of doing business, including lower land costs and lower taxes.
- Virginia Coalfields Economic Development Authority incentives
- National Small Business Innovation Research Council conference to be held in the Southeast provides an opportunity for Virginia small businesses interested in participating in Defense procurement opportunities.
- Strong military presence in Virginia provides research and procurement opportunities.
- Proximity to the national capitol strengthens Virginia's economy.
- Nationally-known higher education system
- Strong workforce with loyalty and good work ethics
- Good regional cooperation in some areas of the state.
- Tech corridor between Oak Ridge and Virginia Tech.
- Strong federal presence in the state in the state interested in commercializing research.
- Strong interest and involvement among elected officials.
- Russell County pilot project involving CGI-AMS
- New coal-fired power plant
- Strong university presence in the region
- Appalachian Regional Commission and Economic Development Authority presence

Leveraging Challenges

- Building relationships between local/state/federal governments and higher education institutions and ensuring that they are working toward the same goals.
- Brain Drain – need to keep talent in the region.
- Changing the mindset of the workforce to adapt to a global economy.
- Need to gain more buy-in for SBIR – a Department of Defense procurement assistance program.
- Need greater regional leadership to build regional consensus.
- Certain areas of the region are remote and work in geographic silos.
- Lack of venture capital and research & development capital.
- Poor capital resources for commercializing R&D – nurturing research to the next stage.
- Geographic distance and poor transportation infrastructure
- Loss of manufacturing jobs makes marketing the area more difficult
- Education and skill level of displaced workers is lower than needed to fill more advanced jobs.
- Culture of lower educational expectations.
- Cultural differences may not be accepted as readily as in urban areas.
- Harder to cater to more urban tastes in restaurants, recreation, cultural attractions.

Leveraging Recommendations

- Establish a Southwest Virginia summit to bring state and local leadership to common goals and commitment. This regional body would spearhead and sustain efforts and must include educational community

- Establish cooperative effort by U.S. Department of Agriculture, Tobacco Commission, Economic Development Authority, and the Appalachian Regional Commission to develop and carryout regional development strategies.
- Explore if federal government has interest in moving certain functions to lower cost areas.
- Create regional portal to foster communication between economic development, tourism, workforce, education, and local officials to improve regional cooperation.
- Establish a mean of better communicating Federal Grant opportunities to interested parties.
- Market region to incoming employees and business while also instituting programs to improve local schools and the quality of life.
- Create a stronger environment for Research and Development by:
 - Providing broadband infrastructure
 - Improving schools by establishing entrepreneurial education; emphasizing science and math; giving teachers exposure to new economic opportunities for their students; establishing mentoring programs between schools and high tech employers.
 - Upgrade infrastructure including water, sewer, transportation, and energy.
- Department of Housing and Community Development work with faith- and community-based-organizations to build tolerance of cultural differences.
- Establish a research and development center in far Southwest Virginia to work with companies in materials, polymers, and electrical/mechanical areas.

IV. Strong Regions/Strong Communities

Regional/Community Strengths

- Labor force stability and work ethic
- Beautiful scenery
- Cultural Resources
- Educational System (CC system & four-year) – meeting needs of employers, articulation agreements between them
- Infrastructure: water, sewer, transportation, broadband
- Coal – Alternative fuel source, Power Plant
- Regional collaboration and cooperation
- Recruitment of CGI/NG – ability to compete for high-tech projects
- Good cross-section of industries, diversification
- Excellent retirement community
- Low cost of living
- Extending educational opportunity - Law, pharmacy, ophthalmology dentistry, forensics (Specialized areas)
- Quality of life
- Temperate climate
- Availability of land (variety of uses)
- State parks & private investment for entertainment & recreation
- Small town – successful revitalization
- Repository of family history
- Sporting events – NASCAR
- State Resources – having a permanent presence in Southwest VA (regional office)
- People-friendly & resourceful

Regional/Community Challenges

- Poverty & low income (when NOVA removed from stats. \$15,000 (ex.)
- “Brain Drain” – Talent loss (specialized skilled workers, electricians, welders)
- High disability rates
- Lack of transportation, broadband, and sewer in some areas
- Lack of housing - substandard housing (hotel, lodging – public accommodations)
- Low availability of capital loans and venture capital
- Slow growing population – decline
- School curricula in technology fields – middle school
- Need for more vertical integration in energy – natural resources (wood products)
- Inflexible mindset of some local governments and communities
- Higher than average high school drop-out rate
- Lack of professional office parks
- Lack of incentives for commercial/retail development
- Lack of integration between economic & community development
- Spotty access to healthcare
- Lack of long-range community planning
- Negative perception of SWVA from people outside the region
- Lack of amenities (cultural – bars – Starbucks – theatres), access beyond 9 p.m.
- Accumulation of wealth & capital for area families for the affordability of basic amenities & needs (healthcare, housing)
- Lack of a wealthy private sector-community reinvestment sector
- Regulatory requirement for housing development & transportation too rigid
- Leveraging broadband – limited internet access
- Increase funding for rural areas for workforce training

Regional/Community Recommendations

- Continued & increased funding for infrastructure (sp. ARC) (Federal funds). Includes broadband, water, sewer, last mile funding (includes no competition between water & sewer projects)
- Develop incentives (access to capital – technical, ex. Impact- based incentives) to provide business development support
- Implement entrepreneurial programs in public schools
- Increase dual enrollment opportunities
- Strengthen small business programs, including funding for SBDC
- Strengthen capital programs for financing & providing assistance to small businesses
- Streamline the application process
- Provide Incentives to private developers (retail, hotel, housing) in rural areas
- Develop program for recruiting retirees to locate in our area
- Increase funding for rural areas for workforce training (include non-credit courses)
- Develop product design program to utilize resources in the area
- Develop residency programs in rural areas - fund AHEC – area health education center
- Provide tax incentives, debt relief & malpractice insurance for health professionals to locate in the region
- Fund coalfield expressway
- Develop incentives to offset cost of healthcare for small business

I. Business Development and International Trade

Business Development Strengths

- Opportunities to companies
- Labor force, real estate
- Ports
- Existing business climate
- Mid-Atlantic location
- Low cost of business
- Diversified workforce, less congestion
- Internet services , spirit of people
- Business support (AIM program)
- Diversified economy
- Involvement of Governor's office with local community
- Increasing technology
- Opportunities
- People
- Positive business climate and perception
- Diversity and high tech
- R&D, public & private
- Business climate – tax rates
- Stability of economy
- Diversity of companies and labor force
- Good educational system
- Labor availability and workforce climate
- Right to work state
- Retraining
- Location and transportation
- Ports
- Rail
- Trucking
- International airports
- Business-friendly climate (politically, state policies)
- Good technology infrastructure

Business Development Challenges

- Regional differences/problems – disparity in resources
- Lack of/diversity in transportation infrastructure (disparity)
- Labor force – transition from under-educated workforce to more educated/higher tech workforce
- Duplication of state-funded services
- Lack of local expertise in how to deal with global competition (dissemination of info)
- Ability to maintain infrastructure (roads, broad band)

- Fractured workforce delivery system
- Border competition (VA/NC data)

Business Development Recommendations

- Streamline business processes in state (workforce, incentives)
- Build higher level of collaboration, more cooperation
- Acknowledge difference between different regions of state; create different regional plans, customize
- Educational system: do a better job of matching business needs with educational offerings
- Encourage involvement of citizens (including agribusinesses)
- Regional organizations to know their target market
- Conduct gap analysis
- Aggressively pursue target markets by specific industry
- Create effective calling programs for existing industries (local, regional, state)
- Additional funds for training programs

II. Tourism

Tourism Strengths

- Attractions – Museums, waterparks
- Historic Resources
- Genealogic Research
- Tobacco Heritage
- Farmland
- Racing – Martinsville, VIR, South Boston (Virginia's Racing Region)
- State Parks
- Outfitter - Wilderness
- Birding
- Mountain Scenery
- Crooked Road Music Trail
- Beginning regional efforts
- Quality of life
- Arts and crafts related organizations
 - Pottery, artisan networks/centers
- Festivals – crafts, melons, wine, peach, beach
- Hunting and Fishing
- Water recreation
- Native American Heritage
- Central location in the East
- Equestrian interests
- Civil War interests
- American Revolution
- D-Day Memorial and other war memorials
- Civil Rights Heritage Trail
- Designation as Southern Virginia Region

Tourism Challenges

- Low priority on political agenda
- Not considered economic development
- Political arena
- State stopped funding non-state agencies
- Funding availability
- Lack of regional approach/cooperative promotion
- Little public transportation
- Lack of hotels – people stay elsewhere
- Not on major travel corridors – need to channel traffic
- Route 58 improvements stalled – bypassed mountain areas.
- Interstate 73 slow in coming
- Route 501 improvements needed/stalled
- Conflict between tourism and VDOT in signage
- Local issue – need cultural, amusements, and attractions
- Need education/networking/study on what businesses to pursue
- Focus on large business need – need to encourage diversity in economic development and encourage small business.
- Large percentage of population lacks high school diploma
- Need to focus on the quality of life for region – to encourage tourism
- Lack of knowledge – perception of benefits of tourism
- Marketing efforts needed in some regions
- Lack of facilities to host large events – sports, conventions

Tourism Recommendations

- Study to identify regional potential, who travelers are and best practices to encourage regional tourism
- Provide state incentives and matching funds for regional marketing; and reinstate non-state entities ability to apply for state funds
- TIC needs open forum for community to discuss needs and also needs to establish a tourism committee
- Develop local advocacy effort to work with elected officials and the public to build knowledge and awareness of the benefits of tourism through all avenues, including businesses
- Develop state tourism “master plan” for localities and regions to tap into and develop the infrastructure to use this resource
- Finish widening Route 58 – Partner with economic development and other key groups to grow advocacy
- Focus on creating destination based on regional attractions/natural resources
- Develop regional/local infrastructure to tap into existing state resources.
- Build local political connections in support of tourism – advocacy grass roots and public awareness campaign
- Foster community involvement through media – how to route traffic
- Develop state guide/blueprints for under developed areas to follow in local efforts
- Develop business/tourism best practices for localities and region to follow
- Ask businesses to participate in internet advertising campaign

III. Leveraging Federal Assets/ Research and Development

Leveraging Strengths

- Potential to receive funding
- State university and college system
- Currently taking action to improve educational systems
- Regions location between Washington, DC and Research Triangle
- Low cost of doing business
- Proactive attitude of community leadership
 - Tobacco commission
 - Legislator
 - Government – local
 - Universities and colleges
 - Community Colleges
 - Business
 - Regional organizations
- Lifestyle
- Institute for Advanced Learning and Research

Leveraging Challenges

- High unemployment rate
- Community Colleges don't offer engineering degree that will transfer to the 4-year institutions
 - articulation agreements lacking in the field
- Lack of students graduating from high school with an interests or vision of an engineering career
- Lack of intergovernmental cooperation
- NC & VA relationships lacking – business doesn't care about the state line
- Multiple governmental organizations working on similar activities
 - unclear where to go for assistance
- Parents don't always value higher education
 - many first generation college students with a high dropout rate
- High drop out rate for high school students
- Lack of vision for long term and short term solutions to regional problems
- Partnerships between private and public educational systems need to be strengthened
- Matching intellectual property i.e. post graduate students with private sector employers
- Not much commercialization
- Do not have the people to attract the companies/do not have the companies to attract the people
- Attitude of some... if we educate them they will leave taking our investment with them
- Lack of focus on the education of the average student i.e. those that are not college bound
- Difficult for business to pull research out of the universities
- Faculty rewards are focused on sponsored research and publishing and not on ED
- Lack of basic IT infrastructure i.e. cell phones, cable, internet
- Lack of coordination during a company's growth cycle to keep them in the community
- Corporate Board rooms are leaving the community and dimensioning the community's ability to influence decision making for future investment

Leveraging Recommendations

- Invest in distributed research and educational model. Hold universities responsible for economic development and incentives university faculty and staff to focus on economic development.
- Create a Southside version of the Virginia Works Program
- Increase funding for TAG and allow students attending for-profit institutions to be eligible for the grants.
- Encourage cooperation between NC and VA

IV. Building Strong Regional Economies and Strong Communities

Regional/Community Strengths

- Regional Cooperation
- Educational Linkage/CC/Univ.HS
- Strong Work Ethic – Commitment
- Quality of Life
- Natural Beauty
- Low Cost of doing business
- Low Cost of Living
- Technology Development
- Accessibility/Transport
- Historic Region/Tourism
- Available Workforce
- Marketing of the Economy
- Promotion – website
- The Institute of Advanced Learning and Research (IALR)
- R & D Capability
- Local Government gets it (understands the need for good government)
- Promotion of Technology
- Creativity/New Development
- Community Adaptability
- Job Diversity
- Spirit of Investment
- Public/Private Partnership
- Land Available
- Business Incubators
- Motor Sports
- Martinsville
- South Boston
- VIR Halifax
- Virginia Tech/Motorsports R & D
- Broadband – 700 miles
- Low Crime
- Social Activities

Regional/Community Challenges

- Lack of education

- Lost industrial base
- Reluctance to change careers
- No interstate access
- Political minority vs. NOVA
- Jobs vs. talent pool
- Lack of coordination of workforce development ---Jobs
- Immigration Issues
- Youth Retention
- Transportation Cost
- Travel to jobs
- Elderly
- Lack of corporate headquarters located in area
- Grants – flexibility of funding
- Tobacco Commission – flexibility/accountability
- Regional Marketing
- Negative image
- Professionalism – local government
- Two Virginia Communities
- NOVA
- All others
- Lack focus on local business
- Lack of adequate housing
- Student and middle class
- Rental
- Regional varieties of economic development
- Infrastructure
- Lack of healthcare
- Doctors
- Nurses
- Private healthcare clinics, i. e. Patient First
- Lack of recruitment of retired persons
- Drug/crime related activity
- Sub par performance in schools

Regional Community Recommendations

- Merge workforce development activities (agencies) under Community College
- Revenue sharing among local governments.
- Operate more regionally: economic development, workforce training, secondary education.
- Realigning state incentives for ED to regional needs.
- Capital support for entrepreneurs.
- Better communication among organizations on economic development activities.
- Programs to fully integrate higher ed institute
- Develop a total partnership at all levels (job development between state and region).
- Promote dual-enrollment.
- Business-to-business communication
- Economize development of existing individual programs.
- Promoting strengths of region (retirement, racetrack, tourism, R & D)

- Diversify vocational education.
- Coordinate more apprenticeships
- Regional transportation infrastructure development; fix the bottlenecks (Rt. 501, 58, and I-77).
- Retrain incumbent workers.

I. Business Development and International Trade

Business Development Strengths

- Low unemployment
- Universities
- Research & Development
- Skilled & Diverse Workforce – High Tech
- Transportation
 - Airport
 - Port
 - Rail Road
- Geographic Location
- D.C.
- Climate (four seasons)
- Proximity to markets
- Historic value of well run state
- Population density
- High tech
- State is a WINNER!
- Willingness to change and grow
- Right to work
- Workforce Services Program
- Regulatory climate
- Average & low cost land
- Natural Resources
- Tax system
- Diversity industry & Government (employer)
- Communication infra-structure
- Fiscal responsibility of state, AAA bond rating
- Quality of Life
- Evolving International Trade & overseas offices
- Pro-Business State – 400 yrs. for profit
- Encourage entrepreneurs
- Moderate political climate
- Leader in communication technology
- Military & National Defense Industry (BRAC)
- Strong legal environment
- Strong regional Economic Development groups
- Strong banking & financial lending
- Low power cost

- Public/Private Colleges
- Balanced Economy – AG & Tech
- Tobacco Commission
- VEDP & Government support Economic Development

Business Development Challenges

- Transportation Network
 - Northern Virginia & Hampton Roads congestion is the general condition
 - North/South corridors –congested
 - East/West not served by interstates
 - Aviation Service is lacking in some areas
- Venture Capital (lack) Biotech & Information Technology
- Incentive Funding
 - Red tape and inflexible
 - Outdated model
 - Target markets
- Turf battles between localities
- State vs. local taxes
- Lack of funding for small business development
- Lack of funding for entrepreneurs
- Dillon Rule
- Fragmented workforce training
- Lack of focus on existing businesses
- GOF-eligibility Requirements for VA Business
- Accessing Federal funds for Workforce Training (not doing enough)
- Don't capitalize on Research University
- Lack of technology penetration, Lack of infrastructure in rural Virginia (WWW)
- Foreign Investment opportunity (lack of Visa's for foreign workers)
- Fragmented International strategy
- General Assembly not focused on economic development
- No growth
- Lack of workforce, numbers and quality
- Lack of affordable health insurance
- Affordable workforce housing
- Lack of International business strategy for all sectors (Agriculture, Business/Trade & Ports)
- Uneven quality at K-12
- Brain drain
- Pipeline for workforce to match business needs
- No comprehensive plan for Business Development
- Lack of technical training in trade
- Over reliance of real estate taxes
- Aging population – no succession plan

Business Development Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive International Marketing Plan across agencies and secretariats
- Long-term funding plan for transportation
- Re-examine Incentive to realign with the new economy and targeted industries

- Comprehensive plan to develop infrastructure needs of rural areas
- Fulfill existing commitment for incentives (enterprise, VIP) (fully fund existing commitments), educate legislature and executive branch
- Create a pool for small business health insurance
- Incentivize the creation of Venture Capital Funds
- Focus/Prioritize vertical industries
- Fund commercialization of Research & Development on our colleges and universities
- Leverage strengths of universities (integration of universities)
- Workforce development must be demand driven – involve industry in skills development; establish metrics, goals, accountability
- Align taxes & incentives to encourage target industry investment and growth at the state and local levels

II. Tourism

Tourism Strengths

- Diversity of tourist attractions (historic, theme parks, natural resources)
- Diversity of destinations (beach, mountains, metro)
- Diversity of activities
- Location and close proximity of above
- Strong/growing retirement population to support these
- Quality of tourism activities supports quality of life and employer/employee decisions
- Recreation opportunities, both internal and external
- Accessibility of Virginia to majority of populations

Tourism Challenges

- Insufficient workforce to support tourism industry (educated workforce)
- Turnover
- Skilled workforce; stagnant/shrinking
- Newcomers vs. locals conflict in services wanted
- Cutbacks in federal funding (forests, state parks)
- Lack of bike/pedestrian paths
- Pay scale for entry-level positions and tourism positions
- Lack of support from the tourism industry
- Lack of incentives, reduced regulations, support from state for tourism industry (i.e. film, major events) – marketing, advertising, tourism zones
- Coordination with other state agencies (i.e. DEQ, VDHD, VDOT, commerce & trade with natural resources)
- Welcome Center maintenance (VDOT)
- Lack of signage – red tape to get signage, business sponsorship
- Lack of understanding by local leaders of tourism as a business rather than recreation; tourism funding = workforce development (relates to turnover/retention)
- Major event coordination of various entities, red tape, funding

Tourism Recommendations

- Educate state and local leaders and citizens on effects of tourism on workforce development, education and local economy
- Build upon existing markets and branding campaigns to include expansion of Virginia is for Lovers theme, Jamestown 2007, signage and gateways
- Increase coordination & collaboration among state entities and stakeholders
- Increase signage for tourist attractions and special events
- Focus on gateways, major arteries
- Reduce red tape to get signage marketing
- Increase funding for VTC to support tourism promotions and infrastructure. VDOT for welcome centers, roads and signage, state parks and other.
- Build upon Virginia is for Lovers campaign; niche marketing (horse, ski, history)
- Support through decreased regulation, increased marketing of agribusinesses (i.e. wine industry)
- Promote tourism-related jobs
- Encourage participation in available programs & development of new programs for skilled positions in tourism industry
- Create a state level sports or special events coordinator/commission

III. Leveraging Federal Assets/Research and Development

Leveraging Strengths

- Existing universities and federal laboratories with strong research and development (R&D) programs
- Presence of Howard Hughes Medical Laboratory
- Presence of Phillip Morris Medical Laboratory
- Virginia Economic Development Partnership and Vice Presidents for Research of Virginia corporations and businesses have established ties and strong lines of communication.
- Ability of Virginia Commonwealth University to attract private funds
- Presence of existing R&D Companies (i.e. Chesterfield cluster in defense R&D)
- For BRAC, the location of most parts of the state close to the national capitol, but outside of “blast zone”
- Virginia received a net gain from BRAC process
- Senior Senator on Armed Services Committee
- VCU:
 - Research university
 - Medical school
 - Good fundraising ability
 - Biotech Park
- State has several interstates and highways on the strategic highway network
- Central Virginia has diverse workforce – highly educated with variety of skills
- Good quality of life
- Port of Richmond and Port of Hampton Roads
- Strong regional cooperation in Central Va. area
- Presence of Ft. Lee and Defense Supply Center
- Creation of Virginia National Defense Industrial Authority to address BRAC

Leveraging Challenges

- A lot going on in R&D in the state and region could be more coordinated
- State doesn't market to venture capitalists and has done no work to attract them
- Weak incentive programs for R&D – Maryland, North Carolina and Pennsylvania have much stronger incentives
- Lack of state focus on attracting R&D
- Virginia needs to do more work to be seen as a viable R&D location
- Previous focus on attracting “big fish” employers and not entrepreneurs
- Virginia needs a “university system” that is focused and specialized in R&D.
- Declining federal funding for R&D
- Interim or “transitional” R&D funding is lacking
- No housing enterprise zone to deal with BRAC housing issues
- Ineffective and unreliable train service
- Communication infrastructure is spotty and inconsistent
- Public is not aware of the defense procurement certification process
- Shortage of skilled tradesmen
- Many potential employees can't pass drug test
- Local land use is threatening military bases
- Not enough suitable space on or near military bases for specialized military functions
- Difficult to get funding for spec buildings
- There are unique issues and on-going needs for military bases affected by BRAC
- Transportation network not positioned to deal with influx of new residents from BRAC
- BRAC presents infrastructure problems in the Fort Lee area with 11,000 new residents expected– from schools to the lack of affordable housing
- Potential loss of seniority in the U.S. Senate
- Strong military presence makes us a target for future reductions
- Virginia Support for military assets lags behind some other states. Texas, for example, passed a \$250,000,000 bond issue to deal with military needs
- No incentives in place to attract and maintain high-paying military jobs
- Perception of “need” to be in the D.C. area – need better marketing of other areas of the state
- Bullet train development is slow
- State liaison office could be more effective and coordinated in providing advance notice of federal actions and more proactive in communication with federal labs

Leveraging Recommendations

- Establish interim funding for research to close the gap between major grant awards
- Assist military installations and surrounding communities in the implementation of BRAC recommendations
- Develop a process to establish a focus or priority on where state spends its R&D money
- Increase funding to address BRAC issues. Current funding is insufficient to address issues in all areas of the state
- Develop a marketing and retention strategy for federal and military installations
- Educate the legislature on the economic impact of military installations in Virginia
- Establish housing enterprise zones to address housing needs at Ft. Lee and Ft. Belvoir
- Hold a conference or provide education on the federal procurement process to improve communication and knowledge of resources and assist contractors and subcontractors

- Improve the coordination between education and workforce to market opportunities in the skilled trades at an earlier age.
- Support logistics curriculum at John Tyler Community College and Richard Bland to support Fort Lee.
- Virginia liaison office needs to undertake more proactive communication and interaction.
- Provide incentives for developers to do spec buildings with the right kind of space for military and federal labs.
- Commonwealth Technology and Research Grants need continuity for funding projects to completion
- Focus Tobacco Commission funding on attracting specific industry R&D
- Engage existing companies in getting legislative support for R&D – demonstrate the paybacks using localities and regions as examples.
- Focus on attracting venture capital and institutionalize the effort
- Clarify intellectual property transfer with university-based research to move R&D into commercial applications.
- Develop a comprehensive catalog of current Virginia R&D efforts.

IV. Building Strong Regional Economies/Strong Communities

Regional/Community Strengths

- Central Virginia Location
- Transportation
 - interstate
 - airport
 - rail – ports
- Regional Organizations in place WIB, Community Colleges
- Existing business clusters
- Transportation accessibility ports, rail, road, airport
- Diversity – Urban
- Affordable Housing in some areas
- Virginia Business climate consistency
- Strong Educational System
- Strong Tourism base
- Strategic Location geographic
- Strong Population Growth

Regional/Community Challenges

- Counties and government entities competing against one another
- Lack of infrastructure in rural areas – broadband building – lack of funding
- Planning and codes inhibit economic development education and communication between government entities
 - recognize increase communication for all levels
- Disconnect between Economic Development and workforce Development
 - public awareness of jobs for future

- non-communication between regional organization turf issue
 - no regional approach
- Lack of public awareness and local decision makers about workforce and economic development
- Lack of comprehensive planning and common vision
- Lack of incentives for small business
- Rural Diversity
- Skill Level of Workforce
- No growth attitude grass roots level
- Local government attitude
- One term governor
- Lack of funds from state and local
- Transportation – inability to address issues
- Regional Cooperation overlap of groups duplication of efforts communication
- Meeting needs of population
- Regulatory Barriers (state & local)
- Other infrastructure water, sewer, power, broadband

Regional/Community Recommendations

- Regional cooperation “BRAC” how it works!
- Workforce Development coordination of emerging job growth to education “Career Paths” understanding
- State investment in education and transportation
- Manufacturing Cluster view as a whole
- Refocus from Statewide to Regional economic development
- Funding program for ESOL for onsite business for workers and family
- Greater focus and funding to small business (25-75) development
- Coordination industry growth sectors and education
- Rational Transportation – doable regional transportation solutions
- Reasonable Rational and Comprehensive Land usage between state, regional and local governments
- Changing educational institution – attitudes to cooperation with industry
- Need for a more complete rural development strategy
- Rational Transportation plan
 - Alternatives to car mass transit
 - Linkages to redevelopment and land use
- Encourage Regional Cooperation look at regionalizing services (incentive to accomplish)
 - refund the regional competitiveness program
- Regulatory reform replace Dillon rule
 - uniform state regulations
- Energy – go back to rate-based regulations
- Investment in Higher Ed and Research and Development

I. Business Development

Business Development Strengths

- Ports
- Military Assets
- Business support services (such as training, export assistance, site location assistance)
- Business Costs/ Quality of Life / Infrastructure / S&B
- Diversity

Business Development Challenges

- Transportation – congestion, lack of public transportation
- Incentives / Research & Development – lack thereof, or not enough funding, or not the right type
- Political structures and Communications – need to develop more statesmanship in political leaders; also need better mechanisms to bring public policy issues to the citizens earlier in the deliberation process (regional transportation referendums needed to be promoted earlier so public is more educated about the issues)
- Skilled workforce
- Research & Development / University – none in top 50 in R&D in country.

Business Development Recommendations

- Benchmark state programs for best practice, across all areas of policy issues (incentives, taxation, business assistance, R&D, seed and VC funding, etc.)
- Create “Greater good” legislation (cross-cutting) – means that legislators should view policy development in the context of state priorities, but with a regional solution. Statesmanship.
- Develop Advanced Training Centers and develop relationships with private business for skilled labor
- State supported regional office/business parks funded by revenue sharing
- Skilled labor redeployment plan
- Use community college system to train for tech skills / link students and business
- Encourage bipartisan statesmanship
- Dedicated funds from New Business Tax to fund new incentive programs
- Adopt Long Term Transportation Plan incentives to reduce traffic Ø HOV lanes
- Identify working programs and optimize
- Develop regional land use: ports, military
- Link exiting military personnel to private-sector jobs – more effective system. Link DOD with SCORE
- Aggressively market government business support services. Establish a business services clearing house at the regional level
- Create more collaboration between VA Tourism and VEDP re: Image / Quality of Life / Promotion

- Establish Comm. Capacity building program (comm. Certification)
- Encourage use (effective) of web-based communications (state, regional, local)
- Build awareness of “diversity boards” (currently at state level) and incorporate them into the economic development process – they have great business connections in the international world.
- State-supported regional planning/land use—solutions differ depending on the region
- Attract venture capital funds through incentives
- Direct seed funding into venture capital programs
- Training workshop on pitching for venture capital by entrepreneurs
- Educate venture capital/Angel investors about opportunities
- Leverage New Market Tax Credit program
- Incentives – VC – Training – provide incentives for venture capitalists to look at Virginia companies – such as the Angel Investor tax credit. Also provide training for entrepreneurs to help them understand how to position their financial need most effectively.
- Tuition Reimbursement – Trade education

II. Tourism

Tourism Strengths

- Diversity of Product
- Three (3) nice sized Convention Centers (Richmond, Hampton & Virginia Beach)
- Diversity in Attraction
- Willingness to work together
- Strategic location on East Coast
- Virginia Wineries
- Diverse Culinary offerings
- Natural Resources
- Nationally known attractions
- Virginia Tourism Corporation – Made up of Industry Professionals
- Athletic Venues
- Historic Resources – 2007 America began here
- Close proximity of large population centers
- Military presence – visiting friends and relatives
- Heritage travel
- Government Conference business
- Virginia Brand – Virginia is For Lovers – longevity and recognition
- Rich diversity of nature-based tourism esp. 50+
- Southern Hospitality
- Educational – Hospitality, sports, culinary, technology, event planning
- Strong festivals and events – nationally recognized
- Interstate System – 95, 64, 77, 81
- Dulles Airport – world wide access to Virginia

- Golf Resources – water related recreation
- Welcome Center staff
- Growing Film Industry

Tourism Challenges

- Transportation – I-95 congestion, bridges and tunnels
- Inter-regional difficulties with tunnels and bridges (Hampton Roads Tunnel)
- Long time required to make improvements, getting worse
- Lack of reliable public transportation – workforce to job- need more options
- Move commuters off road – poor jurisdictional connectivity
- State needs to ensure connectivity to new systems
- Cost of Air travel makes it difficult to attract conventions
- Need more low-cost/discount air carriers
- Hub system is inconvenient
- Need to do a better job of developing Canadian travel
- Lack of marketing resources – Tourism cut by more than 50% recently
- Powers not well-educated on value of tourism – complacency among elected officials
- Need marketing to attract first time visitors – very competitive industry – Virginia not com
- Welcome Centers are an embarrassment – dirty and congested.
- Rest Stops not well maintained
- Improve marketing to “emerging” markets – Latin, African American
- Lack of Coop Opportunities with VTC – matching funds
- Taxes – Lodging and meals not always dedicated to tourism
- Need to better communicate convention center opportunities
- Lack of regional cooperation – perception of dissention
- International Market – US no longer funds overseas marketing – international market has declined
- Gas prices and national travel trends sometimes locked into marketing campaign – hard to change rapidly when circumstances change

Tourism Actions – General Comments

- Fund co-op grant program – matching grant for regional marketing – good return on investment
- Develop a dedicated funding source for tourism using portion of existing state sales taxes based on tourism business. Use for state/regional marketing.
- Use waterways and other alternative transportation to relieve road transpiration
- Develop state-wide hospitality training and certification program for front line employees and use incentives to encourage employee/employer participation
- Establish marketing program to attract employees from under served population to work in tourism. Start early to teach students about opportunities
- Develop comprehensive statewide program to educate elected officials about economic impact of tourism now and in the future – Virginia Hospitality and Tourism Association/local tourism authorities

- VTC and VEDP Convention and Visitors Boards work together in coordinated way to do product development – attract flagship hotels, destination attractions, high-end retail
- Devote greater attention and resources to target developing/emerging markets; i.e., Latin, African American and other minorities
- Study means of refreshing and re-invigorating Virginia's attractions in public's mind – how to use new technology to reach the public
- Stops raids on existing tourism funding and recognize that there's a limit to what tourism taxes can change without undermining the market
- Develop tourism anti-terrorist/security plans to respond to emerging threats

III. Leveraging Federal Assets/Research and Development

Leveraging Strengths

- Community College System
- Technology Councils, such as Old Dominion's Modeling and Simulation Center
- Support for small corporations
- Plethora of educational choices
- Good quality of life
- Ongoing scientific research in the region
- Political openness and results
- Geography and proximity – central location on east coast
- People
- Proximity to federal facilities and government
 - Oceana
 - Langley
 - Joint Forces Military Command
- Ongoing university and government research collaborations
- Ports
- Organizations such as:
 - Hampton Roads Technology Council
 - Hampton Roads Partnership
 - Hampton Roads Research Partnership
 - Virginia Institute for Marine Science
 - VMASC?
- Good telecommunications infrastructure
- Potential for R&D growth in universities and military presence
- NIA(?) statewide

Leveraging Challenges

- Military presence with lower income population and economic dependence
- Lack of corporate headquarters and Fortune 500 companies
- Shortage of professional jobs makes it more difficult to connect graduate programs to local employment.
- Congested traffic and inadequate transportation resulting from poor development choices

- Supporting small business requires local and federal resources
- BRAC closures for Ft. Monroe and Oceana and the local dependence on these bases.
- Lack of venture capital and translational research investment funds
- Perception of Hampton Roads by VEDP
- Insufficient incentive funding

Leveraging Recommendations

- Re-instate funding and support for Regional Competitiveness Program in relation to emerging technologies
- Invest in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education and workforce development (emphasizing modeling and simulation and SOLs)
- Establish and fund economic development offices in universities/community colleges
- Create a fund for translational (commercial) research
- Create effective incentives for business attraction
- Provide creative financing for business creation
- Establish and fund rewards and incentives for economic development activities for universities and community colleges
- Diversify modeling and simulation markets to other areas such as healthcare, transportation, and other emerging technologies
- Fund Governor's transportation plan
- Fund state technology incubators
- Emphasize university collaboration statewide.

IV. Building Strong Regional Economies/Strong Communities

Regional/Communities Strengths

- Geographic Location – proximity to population centers
- Good educational system
- Good climate
- Good economic climate – low tax, reasonable regulations
- Diverse geography – mountains, beaches
- Expanded social service programs for individuals
- Collaborative Efforts
- Strong policies and procedures that are enforced
- Natural deep waters – ports
- Huge land mass for distribution and storage
- Massive federal presence
- History and high tech
- Progressive public education systems
- Diverse/Cooperative populations
- Strong economic development vehicles (public-private partnerships)
- Workforce
- High-tech/R&D facilities
- Good work ethics

Regional/Communities Challenges

- Transportation – moving people resources for individuals
- Fragmentation in services and resources – workforce and business development
- Communication between local governments collaboration
- “No tax” phobia – legislators and public
- Access to higher education and training cost
- Program administration of local workforce system fragmentation
- Lack of focus on industry/region-specific training
- Infrastructure/focus on distance learning
- Broadband access – esp. rural
- Regional and interstate cooperation NC & MD
- Private participation in broadband issue
- Cost prohibitive workforce housing (middle-class)
- Cost of land
- Local land use/ordinances
- Lack of incentives for affordable housing and foraging population
- Regional/Community Recommendations

Regional/Community Recommendations

- Economic development, education, employment connect the dots
- Educate businesses on the importance of their participation
- Educate the complete workforce – train specifically for available jobs
- Instill flexibility in education system re-tooling, life-long learning, adaptable and responsive
- Provide access to transportation jobs and education
- Develop alternative workforce transportation, van pooling
- Provide state/local incentives/collaboration with faith community to provide affordable transportation access
- Provide training/technical assistance to local workforce system (one-stops, community college)
- Provide local and state incentives to developers to provide affordable housing
- More emphasis on “on the job” training fully utilize available programs
- Require training/provide more direction for WIB members
- Market industry-specific training offered by community colleges
- Customized workforce enhancement including state agencies serving disabled
- Provide broadband access to every Virginia
- Provide leadership to fund transportation solution
- Require greater accountability in workforce service contracts (pay for performance)
- Monitor/audit workforce administration costs
 - -more direct costs/person
- Reach out to faith-based community
- Dedicated source of funding for public transportation and code changes
- Fully fund commitment to higher education
- Look for ways to accommodate aging workforce and its changing needs alternatives

- Expand existing telecommuting system to include rural areas
- Recruit more telecommuting jobs
- Partner with military for transportation needs
- Provide training programs for those helping aging population (caregivers)
- Examine/evaluate policies regulations to match current economic situation